

A GUIDE FOR DISTINGUISHING SMALLPOX FROM CHICKENPOX

SMALLPOX



- Incubation period is 7 to 17 days, usually 10 to 14 days
- Communicability begins with the onset of lesions (usually in the mouth) until the disappearance of all scabs
- Prodrome lasts 3-4 days with symptoms such as chills, high fever, severe headaches, backache, abdominal pain, and prostration.
- Lesions slowly progress from macules to papules to vesicles to pustules to scabs
- Lesions appear more or less simultaneously and in any one area on the body are in the same stage of development
- Lesions are distributed more on the extremities and face than on the trunk
- Lesions are deeply embedded in the skin and are frequently found on palms and soles
- Scabs (crusts) form 8-14 days after rash onset and separate 21-28 days after rash onset

CHICKENPOX



- Incubation period is 10 to 21 days, usually 13 to 17 days
- Communicability begins up to 5 days before (usually 1-2 days before) onset of the rash until all lesions have crusted
- Prodrome of 1-2 days may occur which is usually mild with symptoms of fever and malaise. In children, rash is often the first sign of disease.
- Lesions rapidly progress from macules to papules to vesicles to scabs (no pustules)
- Lesions appear in successive crops and in any one area on the body may be in different stages of development
- Lesions are distributed more on the trunk than extremities
- Lesions are more superficial (not embedded deep into the skin) and are usually not found on palms or soles
- Scabs (crusts) form 4-7 days after rash onset and separate < 14 days after rash onset